

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A device for forming a random set of playing cards comprising:

a top surface and a bottom surface of said device;

a single card receiving area for receiving an initial set of playing cards with access to the single card receiving area at the top surface;

a randomizing system for randomizing the order of an initial set of playing cards;

a single card collection surface in a card collection area for receiving randomized playing cards one at a time into the card collection area, the collection surface receiving cards so that all cards are received below the top surface of the device with access to the card collection surface being from the same top surface as the single card receiving area;

the device moving individual playing cards one at a time directly to the single card collection surface;

an image capture device that reads the rank and suit of each card before being received on the card collection surface;

an elevator for raising the single card collection surface so that at least some randomized cards are elevated for removal from ~~[[at-least-to]]~~ the top surface of the device; and

a moveable cover over the elevator and fixed along one edge of the cover to the top surface.

2. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 1 wherein the elevator raises all randomized cards above the top surface of the device and the moveable cover is automatically raised to allow the randomized cards to rise above the top surface of the device.

3. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 1 wherein at least one pick-off roller removes cards one at a time from the card receiving area and moves cards one at a time towards the randomizing system and the image capture device can read a card only after it has been moved by the at least one pick-off roller.

4. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 3 wherein at least one pair of rollers receives each card from the at least one pick-off roller before the image capture device can read each card.
5. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 4 wherein a microprocessor controls movement of the pick-off roller and the at least one pair of rollers.
6. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 4 wherein when a first card being moved by the pick-off roller is being moved by the at least one pair of rollers, movement of the pick-off roller is altered so that no card other than the first card is moved by either the pick-off roller or the at least one pair of rollers.
7. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 1 wherein the randomization system moves one card at a time into an area overlying the collection surface after the one card has been read for suit and rank.
8. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 1 wherein one card at a time is positioned into a randomized set of playing cards over the collection surface.
9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device of claim 7 ~~[[17]]~~ wherein the collection area is bordered on two opposed sides by two movable card gripping elements.
10. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 9 wherein an insertion point to the card collection area is located below a bottom edge of the two movable card gripping elements.
11. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 9 wherein the card collection surface is vertically positionable within the card collection area.
12. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 11 wherein the card collection surface is moved by a motivator that is able to move incremental vertical distances that are less than the thickness of a playing card.

13. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 12 wherein the motor is a stepper motor or an analog motor.
14. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 1 wherein a sensor is present along a line of movement of cards in the device within the single card receiving area or adjacent the single card receiving area and after the image capture device, the sensor indicating a trigger position of a moving card to initiate a timed capture of an image by the image capture device.
15. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 14 wherein at least one microprocessor is present in the device and the at least one microprocessor controls vertical movement of the card collection surface and camera triggering.
16. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 14 wherein at least a second sensor identifies the position of the card collection surface so as to place a top card in the collection area at a position that is level with or above the bottom of at least one card gripping element that is movable from at least one side of the collection area towards playing cards within the card collection area.
17. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 15 wherein the microprocessor is programmed to determine a distance that the card collection surface must be vertically moved to position at least one specific card at a bottom edge of the at least one card gripping element when the card gripping element moves to contact cards within the card collection area.
18. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 16 wherein the at least one card gripping element comprises at least two gripping elements, at least one of which moves from a side of the collection area towards playing cards within the card collection area.
19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device of claim 15 ~~[[25]]~~ wherein the microprocessor directs movement of an individual card into a gap in cards in the collection area between two segments of cards created by support of cards by at least one card gripping element.

20. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 17 wherein the microprocessor is programmed to lower the card collection surface within the card collection area after the at least one element has contacted and supported cards within the card collection area, creating two segments of cards and a gap between the segments.

21. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 20 wherein the microprocessor directs movement of an individual card into the gap, between the two segments of cards.

22. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 1 wherein a microprocessor is controllably connected to the device, the microprocessor directing movement of playing card moving elements within the device, the microprocessor randomly assigning potential positions for each card within the initial set of playing cards, and then directing the device to arrange the initial set of playing cards into those randomly assigned potential positions to form a randomized final set of playing cards with each card in the randomized set having been read for at least rank.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A device for forming a random set of playing cards comprising:

- a top surface and a bottom surface of said device;
- a receiving area for an initial set of playing cards;
- a randomizing system for randomizing an initial set of playing cards;
- a single collection surface in a card collection area for receiving randomized playing cards;
- the randomizing system moving cards directly from the receiving area to place individual playing cards into a set of randomized cards on the card collection surface;
- an elevator for raising the single card collection surface within the card collection area;
- at least one card supporting element within the card collection area that will support a predetermined number of cards within the card collection area; and
- an image capture system that can read at least the rank of each at least one card before it is inserted into a set of cards at a position below the predetermined number of cards.

24. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 23 wherein an at least one card supporting element comprises an element on at least one side of the card collection area that can move inwardly within the card collection area to contact and support the predetermined number of cards within the card collection area.

25. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 24 wherein the at least one card supporting element comprises at least two opposed card supporting elements that move inwardly within the card collection area to contact and support the predetermined number of cards within the card collection area.

26. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 23 wherein a microprocessor is communicatively connected to the device and the microprocessor is programmed to determine a distance that the card collection surface must be vertically moved to position at least one specific card position other than the top card at a bottom edge of the at least one card supporting element when the card supporting element moves to contact cards within the card collection area.

27. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 24 wherein a microprocessor communicatively connected to the device is programmed to lower the card collection surface within the card collection area after the at least one card supporting element has contacted and supported cards within the card collection area, creating two segments of cards and a gap between the segments.

28. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 27 wherein the microprocessor directs movement of an individual card into the gap between the two segments of cards.

29. (ORIGINAL) The device of claim 23 wherein a memory records the reading of each at least one card inserted into a set of cards and the position of each card within the final set of cards is identified to create an index of all cards in a final set of cards.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A device for forming a random set of playing cards comprising:
a top surface and a bottom surface of said device;

a single card receiving area for receiving an initial set of playing cards;
a randomizing system for randomizing the order of an initial set of playing cards;
a collection surface in a card collection area for receiving randomized playing cards one at a time into the card collection area directly from the single card receiving area, the collection surface receiving cards so that all cards are received below the top surface of the device;
an image capture device that reads the rank and suit of each card after it has begun leaving the single card receiving area and before being received on the card collection surface;
an elevator for raising the collection surface so that at least some randomized cards are elevated ~~at~~ least to for manual removal of playing cards from the top surface of the device; and
a moveable cover over the elevator and fixed along one edge of the cover to the top surface.

CLAIMS 31- 36 (CANCELED)

37. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of randomizing a group of cards, comprising the steps of:

placing a group of cards to be randomized into a card in-feed tray of a playing card randomizing device;

removing cards individually from the card in-feed tray and delivering the cards directly and one-at-a-time into a card collection area, the card collection area having only a single moveable lower surface, and a stationary opening for receiving cards from the in-feed tray;

elevating the moveable lower surface to a randomly determined height;

grasping at least one edge of a group of cards in the card collection area at a point just above the stationary opening;

lowering the moveable lower surface to create an opening in a stack of cards formed on the lower surface, the opening located just beneath a lowermost point where the cards are grasped;

inserting a card removed from the in-feed tray into the opening;

after randomizing all cards, elevating a collection of randomized cards seated on the single moveable card collection surface so that the randomized cards may be manually removed from a top of the playing card randomizing device; and

reading at least the rank of each card after it is individually removed from the card in-feed tray and before it has been inserted into the opening.

38. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 37 wherein after a card has been inserted, and when a presence of at least one additional card in the card in-feed tray is sensed, the elevator moves to another randomly determined height, creating another opening.

39- 42 (CANCELED)

43. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An automatic card shuffler comprising:

- a housing capable of being mounted flush with ~~[[into]]~~ a gaming table surface;
- a card receiver for accepting a group of cards to be shuffled by insertion of cards from an opening level with the gaming table surface;
- a randomizing system for randomizing the order of an initial set of playing cards;
- a single collection surface for receiving all randomized cards;
- an elevator for raising the single collection surface to an elevation ~~proximate~~ wherein all randomized cards may be manually removed through the gaming table surface;
- a moveable cover hinged along one edge of the cover and moveable above the elevator; and
- a microprocessor for controlling the operation of the card shuffler.

44. (ORIGINAL) The automatic card shuffler of claim 43 further comprising an automatically movable cover that is closed at least part of the time over at least one of the card receiver and collection surface.

45. (ORIGINAL) An automatic card shuffler, comprising:

- a microprocessor;
- a card randomization mechanism;
- a controller for controlling the card randomization mechanism by means of a user-manipulated remote control device; and

a card moving sequence programmed in memory that enables the automatic card shuffler to move a set of cards from a card receiving position to a card collection area in the shuffler in a non-shuffling event, and to read the rank and suit of each card between the card receiving position and the card collection area in the non-shuffling event.

46- 54 (CANCELED)

55. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A device for forming a random set of playing cards comprising:

- a top surface and a bottom surface of said device;
- a single card receiving area for receiving an initial set of playing cards;
- a randomizing system for randomizing the order of an initial set of playing cards;
- a single collection surface in a card collection area for receiving randomized playing cards one at a time into the card collection area, the collection surface receiving cards so that all cards are received above the single collection surface and below the top surface of the device;
- an elevator for raising the single collection surface to raise at least some randomized cards; and
- a moveable cover hinged along one edge of the cover and moveable over the elevator.